

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTRE 01336 062001Z
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UNCLAS MONTREAL 1336

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: NEW LEADERSHIP FOR TEACHERS' UNION

1. ROBERT GAULIN DISPLACED RADICAL MARXIST YVON CHARBONNEAU AS PRESIDENT OF CENTRALE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT DU QUEBEC AT WEEKEND CONVENTION. VOTE SPLIT WAS APPROXIMATELY 54 PERCENT TO 46 PERCENT. GAULIN THUS BECOMES ONE OF "BIG THREE" LABOR LEADERS IN QUEBEC.

2. CHARBONNEAU'S EXTREMISM HAS LONG BEEN SOURCE OF WORRY TO PARENTS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN. (SEE MONTREAL'S A-62 OF APRIL 23, 1975 FOR DISCUSSION OF MAY DAY TEACHING MATERIALS.) OUSTING, HOWEVER, LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO FAILURE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH RANK-AND-FILE WHO INCREASINGLY DISENCHANTED BY CHARBONNEAU'S GREATER EMPHASIS ON POLITICIZATION THAN BREAD AND BUTTER MATTERS. MEMBERS ALSO AGAINST CHARBONNEAU PROPOSAL FOR COMMON FRONT WITH MILITANT CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS AND, NOT LEAST, CHARBONNEAU PROPOSITION THAT PARTI QUEBECOIS IS A BOURGEOIS TOOL OF CAPITALIST EXPLOITERS. HIS DEPARTURE, IN SHORT, IS PROBABLY MATTER OF RELIEF IF NOT DOWNRIGHT SATISFACTION TO NOT ONLY PARENTS AND MODERATE TEACHERS BUT ALSO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC.

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PAGE 02 MONTRE 01336 062001Z

3. GAULIN IS LARGELY AN UNKNOWN QUALITY, WHO DEFINES HIMSELF AS A SOCIALIST AND INDEPENDENTIST. REGARDLESS OF EXTENT TO WHICH HIS VIEWS MAY PARALLEL THOSE OF CHARBONNEAU, HE WILL BE CONSIDERABLY MORE QUIET IN ENUNCIATING THEM. AVOIDING THE TYPE OF CONFRONTATION THAT CHARBONNEAU SEEMED TO SEEK IS APPARENTLY GOAL OF GAULIN AND THOSE WHO ELECTED HIM. HE HAS ALSO PLEDGED CLOSER CONSULTATION WITH THE MEMBERSHIP.

4. ONLY BIO DATA GIVEN BY PRESS SHOW GAULIN TO BE 39,
MARRIED WITH TWO CHILDREN, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHER
FOR ELEVEN YEARS BEFORE BECOMING FUNCTIONARY IN UNION CENTRAL,
CHARGED WITH COORDINATING NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH LAST TWO CONTRACTS.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH EXTENT TO WHICH NEW LEADERSHIP WILL
MODIFY UNION'S POSTURE ON MANY ISSUES REMAINS TO BE SEEN,
ELECTION OF GAULIN HAS ALREADY HAD HEALTHY EFFECT OF CHANGING
UNION'S IMAGE. GOQ, FACING BOTH PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACT NEGOTIA-
TIONS AND REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN NEXT YEAR, CAN THANK LUCKY STARS
THAT ANGRY RHETORIC THAT HAS MARKED MOST UNION PRONOUNCEMENTS
IN PAST WILL FADE AWAY, EVEN IF UNION DEMANDS DO NOT SOFTEN.
NO ONE EXPECTS THAT THEY WILL, AS GAULIN HAS REPUTATION OF
TOUGH NEGOTIATOR. HIS STYLE, HOWEVER, SHOULD GIVE UNION MUCH
GREATER PUBLIC SUPPORT THAN IT HAS HAD IN RECENT PAST.
HARPER

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